ing had not been so well studied as it is at present. They are constructed without any regard to economy,—and form, indeed, very important public monuments. Some details had to be altered, some of the first works to be demolished, and yet they were all completed at an expense which enables the town to derive a revenue of about 5 per cent., at the present day, after paying all the expenses of the maintenance and working. The establishments of a similar nature constructed in the departments, profiting by the lessons gained in Paris, cost very considerably less. For instance, the Paris abattoirs cost 128f. per metre superficial over the whole surface, of which the buildings cost 385f. Those of Nantes cost, for the surface of the buildings, 192f. 52c; those of La Rochelle, 119f. The abattoir of Havre cost, for the whole surface, at the rate of 40f. per metre superficial; that of Caen at the rate of 61f. We may assume, then, safely, that if the town were to construct these buildings at the present day, they would be executed for half the price they cost originally.

The following table gives the most important figures relative to the surface and the cost of the different abattoirs. The first column gives the surface of the land; the second, that of the buildings; the third, the cost of the land; the fourth, the cost of the buildings.

	Metres super.	Metres super.	Francs.	Francs.
Montmartre	37,210	10,780	99,537	4,745,028
Menil Montant	44,993	12,026	132,776	6,075,187
Villejuif	27,200	6,250	54,493	2,488,753
Grenelle	32,170	8,300	191,552	3,075,191
Roule	23,660	6,340	214,048	2,200,916
Totals	165,265	43,695	562,307	16,785,505

The total sum expended was thus 17,347,612f.; but the delays caused by the fall of Napoleon, and the distress of the early years of the Restoration, increased the capital to nearly twenty millions of francs, when the interest is added. The abattoirs were begun in 1811, and finished in 1818.

The revenue of the abattoirs is derived from a payment for every head of cattle slaughtered therein, calculated at the rate of 2c. per kilogramme. It is, therefore, on the average, 6f. 90c. per bullock, 6f. 18c. per cow, 1f. 26c. per calf, and 40c. per sheep. The rent for the *fondoirs* is 1f. the 100 kilog., the melters finding their own fuel. The rent for the triperies is 30c. per tripe of bullock, and 5c. per tripe of sheep. To insure the preference to their own establishment, the town levies a toll, equal to the above, on such meat, fat, or tripes as are killed or prepared elsewhere.

In the year 1847, the receipts from the abattoirs were 1,197,634f. 33c.; the expenses were 137,830f., including *personnel*, water, lighting, repairs, inspectors of police, &c.; leaving thus to the town a clear profit of 1,059,804f., or more than 5 per cent. on the real capital.

An objection has been raised on the score that the transport of the meat from the abattoirs to the butchers' shops must augment the price. This is not really the case to any serious extent, for there are at each of them parties who undertake to transport the meat, in large quarters, for 1f. 50c. per bullock or per cow, 60c. per calf, and 10c. per sheep.

The pig abattoirs are different from those for other animals. The most complete is at Nanterre, where about 40,000 are slaughtered every year. It covers about 2,763 metres superficial, and cost 97,000f.: it consists of sixteen killing places (6 m. 75 c. by 5 m. 50 c.), and sixteen divisions, in which the hair is burned off the animals,—the invariable custom in this country, instead of scalding, as with us. The price for the use of these abattoirs is the same as for cattle—namely, 2c. per kilog. of meat, or about 1f. 50c. per pig.

Conclusions.—The details given above show that the expense of establishing proper markets need not, under judicious management, be so great as to render them bad commercial operations. The present state of the cattle market in London cannot be maintained for many years longer, and it therefore becomes important to arrive at correct ideas as to the best course to be followed. The consideration of the expense is the first, and one of the most important ones. Too much stress cannot then be laid upon the success of similar operations in other countries. We have seen that the market of Poissy pays 5 per cent. on the outlay, that of Sceaux must do so likewise, to sink the capital in the nineteen years of the lease. Why should not the city of London be as successful? They might easily raise the capital by the sale of the land occupied by the present market, or by mortgaging the ground rents of the new streets to be built thereupon. But the question does not stop here. Smithfield is a moral and physical plague spot in our wonderful London. In the interest of humanity, then, the suppression of its attendant horrors must be insisted upon. Fortunately, such a suppression need not be attended with loss to the public.

The same remarks apply to the abattoirs. In face of the results they have hitherto produced, we rest amazed that the first city in the world should still be without them. The private slaughter-houses of London are, in fact, the severest censure imaginable upon the municipal organization of our country; and, it cannot be too often repeated, a shame and disgrace to our state of civilization. In Paris, on the contrary, they form public works of great beauty, if that word be interpreted as implying fitness with the end proposed. The architecture adopted is severe, noble, massive, without useless detail; all affectation of prettiness carefully avoided. Even the choice of the materials is well studied. The different kinds of stone used are such as best to fulfil the objects their position imposes upon them; their colours are such as to produce the most consistent and picturesque effect. The wide projections of the roofs, the channels formed by the pantiles, hold colour, and give a play of light and shade which is the more agreeable, inasmuch as it is produced by simple means, and is at the same time conducive to a useful end.

A question of taste is a stumbling block with the corporated bodies in our countries. The few critical remarks ventured above may, perhaps, be displaced under such circumstances. But there still remains the commercial question; and it is marvellous that no one should yet, in the corporation of London, have found out that there was money to be made by the establishment of abattoirs, which would have improved the health at the same time as the appearance of that centre of all that is good and great, as likewise of all that is vile and detestable in Europe. Let us hope that the public feeling, so justly excited by the ravages of the cholera, will enforce an examination of this question. It is time that the abomination of uncontrolled slaughtering of animals should, like its sister abomination of intramural interment, cease to disgrace our metropolis.

G. R. B.

NATIONAL BUILDINGS.

I AM glad to perceive by a recent notice in your excellent paper that it is expected the Government will abandon in future the system of annual parliamentary grants, and create instead a special fund for defraying the expenses of our public works.

To all who are admirers of architectural art, and who are desirous of seeing this country famed for its cultivation, this cannot but prove a most welcome announcement, as it will serve to do away with one of the chief causes of failure, both in design and effect, of so many of our public buildings, namely, the begrudging on the part of the Legislature the sums needed for their erection.

It may be laid down as a general maxim that severe economy applied to the fine, or, as they are sometimes termed, liberal arts, is greatly injurious to their healthful growth and development. Had Sir C. Wren been called upon, with limited funds, to erect a cathedral upon the dilapidated walls and foundations of an ordinary parish church, we should never have had such a building as St. Paul's, and no subsequent outlay, however lavish, could have redeemed the original error; yet this would have been no more than fairly analogous to the case of Buckingham Palace; and all who recollect the parliamentary haggling concerning the estimates for the National Gallery have no just ground for surprise that it does accord with the national wish. In the instance of both these structures all elevation of sentiment and feeling suitable to the occasion was lost in the consideration of reducing the sum voted to the lowest possible amount, in order to meet the views of the economists and political partizans of the day. Under such hard conditions—to say nothing of other and capricious interference—the most gifted architect, checked and constrained as to all original grandeur of thought and conception, could scarcely but have failed to give satisfaction to the country.

In the great architectural examples of past ages, which we profess so much to admire, yet strive so feebly to imitate, no such niggard principles were allowed to prevail to the hindrance and obstruction of important national works. Pericles, Augustus, Leo X., and Louis XIV., Egypt, and Nineveh, bear witness to our own times, and at our own doors, that this is not the way to make art immortal, or to hand down to a distant and admiring posterity, the triumphs and glories of a high civilization. An accurate statistical account of the sums expended upon some of the "mighty works of old," as compared with the cost of the buildings of our own day, would probably go far to explain the reason why, in the majestic art of architectural design, we so seldom attain to the perfection to which we aspire.

But a new era in regard to the fine arts has already dawned upon us. The generous and munificent spirit which has prompted and promoted the palace of the Legislature, is but its first fruit, and is no more than in harmony with the daily improving taste and public spirit which is abroad among the great body of the people. The Government in this, as in so many other respects, is only following in the wake of public opinion and example.

We have every needful proof that there is no lack of architectural taste, or sensibility, or genius among us. On the contrary, we have on every hand the most ample evidence of its continually increasing progress. In the mansions and club-houses, at the west end of the town; in the public-spirited and praiseworthy exertions of the corporation, and of the wealthy bankers and merchants in the city; and, indeed, in every great town and province of the kingdom, we have witnessed within the last twenty years, in this, as well as in all the other arts of design, the most surprising advance.

If to all this be added the various societies which, during the same period, have sprung up in different parts of the country, together with the numerous publications now devoted to advocating and illustrating the progress of the fine arts; we are fully justified in the assertion that the people themselves have taken the lead in this important and interesting movement. In short, the promotion of the arts of design, intimately connected as some of them are with the commercial prosperity and wellbeing of the country, has become the cause of the nation at large; and the great exposition projected by H. R. H. Prince Albert, and which redounds so much to his honour and patriotism, is but another link in the same golden chain. The Government, therefore, do well to make some provision, that, for the future, in the highest and noblest branch of the arts, and that which tends most of all to illustrate the genius of the national character, the resources of the state shall be more liberally applied whenever the public convenience demands, or the honour and dignity, as well as the future renown, of the country may require it. In our public works we build for centuries, not for years,—for the fame and benefit of coming generations, not less than for the convenience and enjoyment of our own. The triumphs of the arts of peace are destined to endure. The volcanic revolutions of France have left untouched its temples and its towers: the lowest and most ferocious *sans culottes* held them in respect: foes and conquerors stood in awe of their grandeur, and Paris is Paris still.

Dr. Johnson says he who improves the public taste is a public benefactor; and if our leading public men and statesmen take advantage of the spirit of the present time, to encourage and foster the onward movement in favour of the arts by a wise application of the mere over-droppings of the aggregated wealth of this great community, our own age may become hereafter distinguished by the happy appellation of that of "Victoria and the arts."

WATCHMAN.

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